Cyd-bwyllgor Corfforedig De-Ddwyrain Cymru | South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

# South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

10.00am on Monday 2 June 2025
At the Council Chamber, Caerphilly County Borough Council
and via Microsoft Teams

## Minutes

| Members | Constituent Authority |
|---|---|
| Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby (Chair) | Leader, Monmouthshire County Council |
| Councillor Dimitri Batrouni | Leader, Newport City Council |
| Councillor Brent Carter | Leader, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council |
| Councillor Joanne Gauden | Executive Member for Economy, Skills & Regeneration, Torfaen County Borough Council |
| Councillor Andrew Morgan | Leader, Leader, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council |
| Councillor Sean Morgan | Leader, Caerphilly County Borough Council |
| Councillor John Spanswick | Leader, Bridgend County Borough Council |
| Mr Julian Stedman | Chair of Planning Committee, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority |
| Councillor Huw Thomas (Deputy Chair) | Leader, Cardiff Council |
| Councillor Stephen Thomas | Leader, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council |
| **Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Officers** | |
| Kellie Beirne | Chief Executive |
| Jayne La Grua | Strategic Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer |
| Mark Watkins | Deputy Strategic Director Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer) |
| Colan Mehaffey | Strategic Director of Policy, Impact and Partnerships |
| Hrjinder Singh | Head of Finance, Risk and Assurance and Deputy S151 Officer |
| Jill Byron | Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer |

## 1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 An apology for Absence was received from Cllr Anthony Hunt, Leader, Torfaen County Borough Council. He was substituted by Cllr Joanne Gauden.

## 2. Election of Chairperson of the Committee for 2025 – 2026

2.1 On a motion from Cllr Huw Thomas, seconded by Cllr Sean Morgan, the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) **ELECTED** Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby as the Chairperson for the municipal year 2025 - 2026.

## 3. Election of Deputy Chairpersons of the Committee for 2025 – 2026

3.1 On a motion from Cllr Huw Thomas, seconded by Cllr Sean Morgan, the CJC **ELECTED** Councillor Anthony Hunt as a Deputy Chairperson for the municipal year 2025-2026.

3.2 On a motion from Cllr John Spanswick, seconded by Cllr Sean Morgan, the CJC **ELECTED** Councillor Huw Thomas as a Deputy Chairperson for the municipal year 2025-2026.

## 4. Declarations of Interests

4.1 There were no declarations of interests.

## 5. Minutes

5.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SEW CJC) **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting of the CJC held on 31 March 2025 as a true and accurate record.

5.2 Mr Julian Stedman clarified that he had left the meeting on 31 March prior to the exempt items being considered.

## 6. Appointment of Monitoring Officer and Appointments Sub-Committee Update

6.1 Kellie Beirne presented the report. The first part of the report set out the recommendations of the CCR Appointments Sub-Committee in respect of the appointment of an Interim Strategic Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer. The second part of the report set out the endorsement of the Appointments Sub-Committee to the Chief Executive's recommendation to secure a fixed-term internal secondment into the role of Director of Regional Growth. The third part of the report set out the additional interim duties payment to be awarded to CCR Energy's Head of Operations, in order to maintain safe site operations and priority activity.

6.2 The Committee approved the recommendations in parts 1 and 2 of the report, including the appointment of Mark Watkins as Interim Strategic Director of Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer. Kellie Beirne, the Chair and Members of the CJC thanked Jayne La Grua, who had preceded Mr Watkins, for her work on behalf

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of CCR and the CJC. The Chair spoke of her measured advice and support through a challenging time, including the transition of the organisation to a CJC.

6.3 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC:

1) Approved the appointment of Mark Watkins as Interim Strategic Director of Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer;
2) Approved the internal advertisement of a 12-month secondment opportunity for the post of Director of Regional Growth; and,
3) Noted the Chief Executive's action to approve an honorarium payment to CCR Energy's Head of Operations, to reflect additional duties that the postholder is undertaking to provide interim management capacity and support covering the period December – ongoing.

*Note: Mr Watkins left the room for the duration of this item.*

## 7. Confirmation of Members and Substitute Members of the CJC and Allocation of Portfolios for 2025-26

7.1 The Committee received a report, presented at the meeting by Mark Watkins, which confirmed the Membership of the CJC for the 2025/26 municipal year, together with each Constituent Authority's nominated Substitute Member. It also sought approval of each CJC Member's portfolio of responsibility and requested that the Committee nominated Members to Chair and Deputy Chair the Regional Transport Sub-Committee and the Strategic Development Sub-Committee, respectively.

7.2 The Committee nominated Cllr Andrew Morgan as Chair and Cllr Lis Burnett as Deputy Chair of the Regional Transport Sub-Committee and Cllr Lis Burnett as Chair and Cllr Andrew Morgan as Deputy Chair of the Strategic Development Sub-Committee respectively.

7.3 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC:

1) Noted the Committee's Membership for the 2025/26 municipal year;
2) Noted each Authority's nominated Substitute Member;
3) Approved the Member Portfolios for the municipal year; and,
4) Nominated Members (as set out above) to Chair and Deputy Chair the Regional Transport Sub-Committee and the Strategic Development Sub-Committee, respectively.

## 8. Appointments to Sub-Committees and Advisory Boards for 2025-26

8.1 The Committee received a report, presented at the meeting by Mark Watkins, to receive nominations and make appointments to the CJC's sub-committees and advisory boards, and to authorise the Monitoring Officer to make appointments to any remaining vacancies thereon.

8.2 The Sub-Committee approved the recommendations. Mr Stedman informed those present that in relation to the Committee's Membership considered in Item 7, this would be his final year in the role of Chair of Planning Committee, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority (BBNPA). It was likely that he would be standing down at BBNPA's AGM on 27 June 2025 and that the current meeting

would be his last as a CJC Member. He thanked the CJC for their support over the last year and confirmed that BBNPA would formally notify the CJC of his nominated replacement on the Committee and the name of the deputy representative. The Chair responded that he would be missed, that he had done sterling work on the Committee's behalf and had made very thoughtful contributions which had enabled Members to better assess the decisions being taken.

8.3 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC:

1) Made appointments to each of the sub-committees and advisory boards established for the 2025-26 municipal year; and,
2) Authorised the Monitoring Officer to make appointments to any vacancies and report any such appointments to the next meeting of the CJC for information.

**9. Programme of Meetings for 2025-26**

9.1 The Committee considered a report, presented by Mark Watkins, seeking approval both for the programme of ordinary meetings of the CJC, and also the provisional programme of ordinary meetings of sub-committees, for the 2025-26 municipal year.

9.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC:

1) Approved the programme of ordinary meetings of the CJC for the 2025-26 municipal year set out in paragraph 4 of the report; and,
2) Approved the provisional programme of ordinary meetings of subcommittees for the 2025-26 municipal year set out in paragraph 5 of the report.

**10. Strategic Equality Plan - Annual Report**

10.1 The report, which sought comment relating to, and approval of, CCR's inaugural Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report, was presented by Colan Mehaffey. He referred to CCR publishing its first Strategic Equality Plan last year, to cover 2024-2028. The Annual Report and accompanying Gender Pay Gap Report and Action Plan had been finalised in March 2025.

10.2 Mr Mehaffey stated that the approach taken in respect of the Strategic Equality Plan was that there were 4 regional objectives and 3 organisational objectives. Good progress had been made in the first year of the 4 year Plan, including refreshing the Impact Investment Framework, recent updates to the Responsible Investment Policy and the introduction of the ESG Scorecard. All of the other actions at a regional level were on track to be delivered within the 4 years of the Plan.

10.3 Mr Mehaffey also mentioned receiving Real Living Wage accreditation during the Summer of 2024 and the position regarding the organisational objectives. He commented that there had been some limitations in terms of what progress was able to be made on the organisational objectives, given some of the capacity restraints of key supporting functions, dependent on recruitment. There was currently a significant vacancy rate of approximately 40% which CCR was working hard to address.

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10.4 The Committee was advised by Mr Mehaffey that a matter that CCR was also seeking urgently to address was the Gender Pay Gap and the Action Plan was a priority. The pay gap had started to reduce and there was a focus on increasing female employees' representation in the upper quartiles of the organisation. There would be dedicated resource to reduce the Gender Pay Gap from the developing HR function within CCR.

10.5 The Chair welcomed the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan as there was a proposed route to addressing the problem. Mr Mehaffey advised in response to a question from Councillor Batrouni that the plan was to seek to launch the regional Economic Wellbeing Data Dashboard in the summer. Social mobility measures would be a core aspect taken into consideration when procuring the Dashboard. An update would be provided at the next CJC meeting.

10.6 Councillors John Spanswick and Huw Thomas welcomed the Real Living Wage Accreditation and moving towards becoming a Real Living Wage region. It was noted that one of the actions was for CCR to scope the feasibility of becoming a Real Living Wage region by working with key regional stakeholders to form a CCR Living Wage Steering Group in 2025-26. Councillor Huw Thomas recommended engaging with the Cardiff Living Wage Steering Group to avoid duplicating effort and looking at whether a single Steering Group would be more effective.

10.7 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC Approved the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report and Gender Pay Gap Action Plan.

**11. MIPIM 2025**

11.1 The Committee received an update report, presented at the meeting by Colan Mehaffey, on the CCR attendance at MIPIM 2025 and the forward view on attendance at future events. Mr Mehaffey referred to inward investment being a critical driver of economic growth and being central to the region unlocking its full potential. He commented that for CCR to compete effectively it needed to sharpen the regional offer, understand investor expectations and have a series of projects which are investable.

11.2 Mr Mehaffey stated that this had been the first year that CCR had been the MIPIM lead for the region, building on the great work of Cardiff Council. He mentioned the key drivers for attending the event, including alignment with CCR's strategic goals, particularly around infrastructure and transport investment and also supporting business partners in attracting investment. The three themes taken forward for MIPIM were sustainability, transport infrastructure and digital infrastructure. CCR worked with 22 private sector organisations as partners for the event. Mr Mehaffey gave examples of significant outcomes from MIPIM including Cardiff's Central Square investment discussions commencing there.

11.3 Mr Mehaffey explained that short, medium and longer term goals had been set in relation to MIPIM 2025 as set out in the report which would assist in determining whether CCR was making an impact with this activity, including understanding how awareness was being raised of the region and how investment was secured. He also explained how the goals had been met in terms of media coverage and that this was a time to learn, understanding what the meaningful metrics were. Mr

Mehaffey added that there had been significant activity and meetings with investment potential which had followed on from MIPIM 2025.

11.4 Mr Mehaffey drew Members' attention to the need for a sustainable approach in the long term via a three-year Events & Sponsorship Plan and an updated Marketing and Communications Plan to support this. It was proposed to bring a report providing more detail on these Plans at the next CJC meeting in July.

11.5 Mr Mehaffey also provided the costs and funding arrangements for attendance at MIPIM, as set out in the report. The total spend had amounted to circa £335,000 (almost 50% of that being underwritten by private sector partners) with a net additional cost to CCR of circa £91,000.

11.6 Cllr Sean Morgan made the point that the report highlighted the importance of showcasing the region, demonstrating how innovative it is on the world stage and securing investment. The Chair commented that in future years the strategic engagement with the Welsh Government and other Welsh regions were likely to be beneficial and lead to additional partnerships which could be built on in the future.

11.7 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC:

1) Noted the performance made against objectives and key performance indicators at MIPIM; and,
2) Noted the forward view on attendance at future events.

**12. Annual Letter of the Chair of the Standards Sub-Committee**

12.1 The Committee noted a letter received from the Chair of the Standards Sub-Committee which provided a synopsis of the work and activities that the Sub-Committee had undertaken during the municipal year 2024/25.

12.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC noted the Chair's Annual Letter.

**13. Annual Letter of the Chair of Governance & Audit Sub-Committee**

13.1 The Committee noted a letter received from the Chair of the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee which provided a summary of the notable findings and activities of the Sub-Committee in its first year since being established.

13.2 Alan Davies, the Chair of the Sub-Committee, addressed Members. He stated that the Sub-Committee had made a good start and had clear thoughts about how it would be able to move forward. He added that there was a good team of Lay Members and elected Members on the Sub-Committee.

13.3 The Chair thanked the Chairs of the Standards Sub-Committee and the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee for their contribution in progressing the Sub-Committees during a challenging period after the transition to the CJC. She also thanked all the Members of both Sub-Committees for the work they were doing on behalf of the region.

13.4 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC noted the Chair's Annual Letter.

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**Exclusion of Press and Public**

The SEW CJC **RESOLVED** that the public and press be asked to leave the meeting during discussion of the remaining items of business because exempt information as defined in Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 is likely to be made known.

NOTE: In accordance to the Standing Orders in relation to the delivery of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority was not represented during the Exempt Session.

**EXEMPT SESSION**

**14. Aberthaw Project Delivery Model**

14.1 Jayne La Grua presented the report.

14.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC approved the recommendations in the report plus an additional recommendation proposed at the meeting.

**15. CSC Foundry Ltd Annual Business Plan 2025-2026**

15.1 The report was presented by Kellie Beirne.

15.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC approved the recommendations in the report.

**16. Investment Zone Update**

16.1 The report was presented by Kellie Beirne.

16.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC approved the recommendations in the report.

**17. Investment and Intervention Report – Report of the Investment Board**

17.1 The report was presented by Kellie Beirne.

17.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC approved the recommendations in the report.

**18. Any Other Business**

18.1 It was agreed that a CJC Leaders' Away Day would be scheduled during July.

Meeting end: 11.39pm

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